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ABSTRACT

This paper contains an overview of current activities and potential opportunities for two-year colleges in the area of international education. While involvement of two-year colleges in international education is generally limited and fragmented, there are four major areas of activity: foreign language and area studies, technical assistance and consultancies, foreign student enrollment, and direct exchanges and study abroad. Most institutions already have some type of program in area studies and foreign languages. Consultancies and assistance opportunities are becoming more widely available, particularly as more developing countries seek aid in establishing two-year and technical colleges. Foreign student enrollment, while limited, has a beneficial effect and should be promoted, but specialized services must be provided to insure that the foreign student has a positive experience. Direct exchange/study abroad programs are accessible to all institutions, although few have taken advantage of them; a specific program at the University of Minnesota Technical College at Crookston is described to illustrate this functioning. A listing of resources available to institutions interested in developing international components of their programs is included in this paper. (JDS)

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

Presented at the Seminar on
International Education at
the 82nd Annual Meeting of
the North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools

Chicago, April 12, 1977

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

Traditionally, cross cultural and international components of academic programs have passed over the two-year community or technical college. Opportunities for study abroad or participating in exchanges have been limited to upper division students majoring in foreign languages, area studies, or the fine arts. For some reason, international education has not been viewed as relevant for students pursuing technical and other two-year degrees. Our position is that the assumptions behind these practices need to be challenged and re-examined. Public awareness of global problems, such as pollution, the preservation of natural resources, and food production, all of which are international issues, call for community and junior colleges to revise their curricula in response to these issues. Those interested in developments in international education for the two-year college may find the following information to be timely and useful. What follows is an overview of what is happening and/or what can be done, including mention of several significant available resources. The programs of the University of Minnesota Technical College, Crookston, are presented as an example.

Because of the relative novelty of international education at this level, there is little hard data that can be used in a convincing manner in support of it. Specific benefits and outcomes, though easy to identify, are difficult to measure. The cultural benefits of international experience are affective kinds of learning, rather than cognitive. Pursuasive evidence in support of such programs comes usually in the form of testimonials from those who have had international experience. The fact that returning students make better citizens, are more informed voters, are more knowledgeable in international

affairs as well as their own field of study, is convincing enough. The honeymoon of "Study Abroad" is over and it is time to mean business, along with cultural awareness and understanding.

What is Happening in Two-Year Colleges?

Generally little or nothing is happening. There are a few pockets of great activity, but in most cases instruction that includes an international dimension is incidental to standard subject areas, such as economics, history, and geography. There are some young organizations with promise and some excellent possibilities on the horizon. But there are few mature, proven, and established programs, excepting perhaps where community colleges have had opportunity to plug into established programs such as the Council on International Educational Exchange, the Institute of International Education, the Teacher Exchange Section of the U. S. Office of Education, etc. The field is a fragmented one, and in order to make it manageable, I have identified four major areas of activity:

1. Foreign language and area studies
2. Technical assistance and consultancies
3. Foreign student enrollment
4. Direct exchanges and study abroad

Let us briefly examine each of these areas, considering implications for planning and institutional commitments.

Foreign Language and Area Studies

No doubt all community and junior colleges deal with international applications of particular content areas. Foreign languages, however, have been abolished in many cases, as foreign language requirements for graduation have also been eliminated. Some languages are offered where there is

sufficient demand from students who wish to transfer to a higher degree program. Other colleges located in strongly ethnic communities find an immediate need for offering languages.

Efforts in this area are perhaps the easiest to implement and they cost virtually nothing. It is the minimum that should be done if we are serious about preparing citizens for living in a future society characterized by interdependence among national and cultural groups.

One of the most significant new developments in the foreign language and area studies category is a federal program known as the "Undergraduate International Studies Program". The program is designed to create centers which specialize in certain parts of the world. Grant recipients are encouraged to develop ties with selected countries, teach its language and culture, and serve as a resource center. Guidelines are outlined in the Federal Register of August 12, 1976.

Technical Assistance and Consultancies

This area holds considerable promise for community and junior colleges across the country, if they are interested enough to become involved. Developing nations are expressing considerable interest in non-traditional, short-cycle higher education systems. These countries need technicians, skilled practitioners, and paraprofessionals. Experience has shown that too many foreign nationals trained in the United States at the master's or doctoral levels end up in administrative positions; or they find that the conditions suitable for the research procedures which they had learned do not exist in their home land. Many attach a certain status to levels of education and a university graduate should not dirty his hands. However, these cultural factors are recognized, and as a result countries of the third world are

looking to the United States and other industralized nations for models and assistance in establishing two year colleges and technical training institutions.

The AACJC International/Intercultural Consortium founded in 1975 was created in response to this need. With headquarters in Washington, D.C. and more than 50 members, this organization serves to pool resources, sponsors conferences on international development and education, provides consultant services, assists in the establishment of links between countries and institutions, and circulates a valuable newsletter. Further information may be obtained from AACJC, 1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 410, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Another significant development known as "The Freedom From Hunger and Famine Prevention Act", known commonly as Title XII, may provide excellent opportunities for two-year colleges to become involved. Designed primarily for land-grant colleges and universities, this act proposes the restructuring of relationships between the Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and educational institutions in the activities of overseas research, development, and teaching. Two-year colleges having ties with land-grant institutions or those with strong programs in agriculture may wish to inform themselves further about the program. Focus is placed on training of foreign nationals in U.S. colleges, sending faculty to teach and conduct research on overseas sights, and engaging in a comprehensive range of development work.

Foreign Student Enrollment

This also is something two-year colleges are already doing, although in most cases it is done haphazardly. Enrollment of foreign students is encouraged because it reduces provincialism among domestic students, it brings added resources to the classroom, and it adds to the social life of the

campus. Research indicates that it is also valuable and influential in foreign relations. A recent Fulbright study shows that enrollment of international students has done more in the development of positive foreign relations than any other foreign aid program.

But, one must be prepared. It is valuable only if the individual student has had a positive experience. A disgruntled foreign student can do much harm. Specialized services must be provided to insure a smoothly functioning foreign student program. These services include 1) personal counseling and orientation; 2) legal advice, particularly relative to the immigration and naturalization service; 3) academic counseling and possibly English as a Second Language; 4) Social activities and organizations; and 5) they must be regarded as a resource and used as such. A booklet entitled Learning with Foreign Students, by Josef A. Mestenhauser, University of Minnesota, is an imaginative and useful guide for this purpose.

All of this requires a competent foreign student advisor, one who has time to devote to these duties, one who is empathic toward cultural differences, and who is genuinely interested in foreign students. The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs provides invaluable assistance in establishing an effective foreign student enrollment program.

Direct Exchanges and Study Abroad Programs

Every institution has access to study abroad programs. Numerous private organizations exist which sponsor and make arrangements for individuals and groups to engage in educational activity overseas. High schools do very well with the American Field Service Program; 4-H and Future Farmers of America conduct tours and exchanges for farm youth. There is the American Institute for Foreign Study, Youth for Understanding, and many others too numerous to

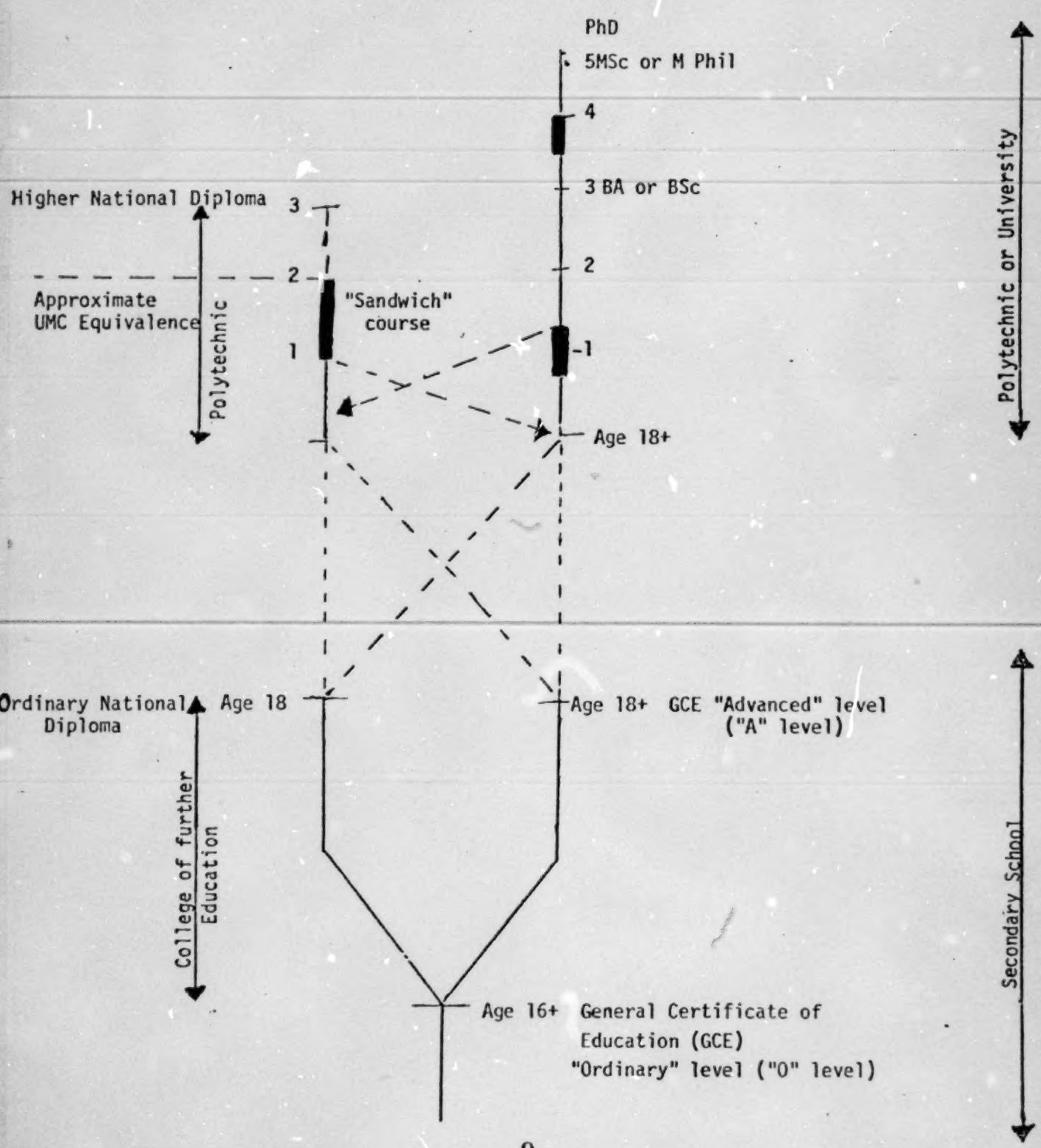
mention. But typically the community college student waits until he has transferred to a four year institution to engage in a "junior year abroad" program. Again, the two-year college student usually misses out.

Perhaps most meaningful in this category are direct exchanges. In this case, an American institution will identify an institution overseas whose curriculum and programming are compatible with its own. The two seek to establish on-going ties and to develop a "sister institution" relationship. They then conduct a reciprocal exchange of information, faculty, and students.

The University of Minnesota Technical College at Crookston operates such an exchange. Called the United Kingdom Reciprocal Exchange (UKRE) Program, four colleges in England, Scotland and Wales have established agreements with UMC. Schools in the United Kingdom were chosen because UMC teaches no foreign languages and a language barrier did not pose a problem. In a two-year program, unless foreign languages are already being taught, the time element in learning a new language restricts significantly the value of a direct exchange.

Secondly, schools were chosen on the basis of compatibility of curriculum and availability of certain subject areas. Preliminary studies were conducted by mail, including the exchange of bulletins, prospectuses, course descriptions, sample examinations, etc., to determine the relative similarity between majors offered at each institution. Careful attention was given to where we "fit" into the British higher educational system. The chart below outlines in skeletal fashion the basic structure of the British educational system. As might be expected, American educational plans do not fit neatly into an equivalent structure in other countries. After considerable study, it was determined that the two-year technical programs at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, parallel very nearly the last year of the Ordinary National Diploma

BRITISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



and the first year of the Higher National Diploma. This is, however, a broad generalization and it must be recognized that some programs compare favorably with the Higher National Diploma in its entirety, while others equate more nearly with the Ordinary National Diploma program. The strong general education or liberal arts component of the American Associate Degree is not found in the British system where specialization is emphasized already in the advanced levels of the secondary track. In this sense, the GCE Advanced Level certificate compares with the American Bachelor's Degree. This is to say that the British Advanced Level certificate holder is as well versed in his area of specialization as the American BA or BS graduate is in his major field, but he does not have the broad base of general education that the American has.

This is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg and I can only stress the importance of being aware of these kinds of differences and of being committed to flexibility in order to work around and within different frameworks.

The UKRE Program was begun in 1974 with the support of a grant from the Educational Development Office of the University of Minnesota. Preliminary studies were conducted by correspondence, a two-week tour of six interested colleges in the United Kingdom followed, and the first exchange of students occurred in 1975-76. In 1976-77 a post-for-post exchange of faculty occurred, along with continued exchanges of students. The successes of these early exchanges have led to a mature and rewarding program and the entire college community has displayed a real commitment to its continuation.

Because of the unique structure and mission of the University of Minnesota, Crookston, liaison was established with four institutions, one for each of the degree-granting divisions of the college; Agriculture; Business; Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management; and Home and Family Services. The

exchange of faculty is facilitated through the established programs of the U.S. Office of Education, Teacher Exchange Section, Washington, D.C., and the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, London. These two offices work together in the arrangement of some 100 post-to-post exchanges annually between the United States and Great Britain. They have long experience and they provide extremely thorough and capable guidance, including the possibility of exchanging homes, automobiles, and many personal effects of concern to involved faculty participants.

In the case of UMC, the Agriculture Division works with Berkshire College of Agriculture, Maidenhead, England, and Elmwood Agricultural and Technical College, Cupar, Scotland; the Business Division works primarily with Kirkcaldy Technical College, Kirkcaldy, Scotland, as does the Home and Family Services Division. Ties have been established for the Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management Division with Llandrillo Technical College, Colwyn Bay, Wales. In our preliminary studies and inquiries, we found a high degree of interest among colleges throughout the United Kingdom, many more than were finally able to participate. While a direct exchange program affects virtually everyone in an academic community, the number of people directly involved is small and the financial commitment is not great.

Resources

Some significant resources had been mentioned above. Further resources are listed here for your consideration. No doubt many readers will be familiar with organizations and resources not listed here. An exhaustive list would be too lengthy to include. This initial listing may, however, stimulate thinking and planning toward viable international education ventures.

1. AACJC International/Intercultural Consortium. This organization is described above.

2. NDEA Title VI - Undergraduate International Studies Program. This program which focuses on foreign language and area studies centers is also described above.

3. Peace Corps, church groups, and other philanthropic organizations have expressed interest in possible supportive and cooperative roles which two-year colleges may play in their ongoing projects. Of particular interest may be the possibility of internships for American students to practice and apply principles of agriculture, social work, business, etc. in developing countries.

4. Rally your own resources. Several exciting examples can be cited where individual colleges have established centers for English as a Second Language, such as for Viet Namese and Cambodian refugees; Spanish-American programs; bi-lingual education programs, etc. The Tri-state Community College Consortium formed by Rockland Community College, New York, Harrisburg Community College, Pennsylvania, and Mercer County Community College, New Jersey is an example of the possibilities for several schools to work together and facilitate international programming.

5. National Association for Foreign Student Affairs. Those schools wishing to develop or expand foreign student enrollment will find the services of NAFSA to be invaluable and constructive. For example, free consulting services are available for evaluating existing resources and for determining steps to be taken toward the development of a smoothly operating program.

Conclusion

Not only does International Education stimulate and revitalize an entire campus, not only is it interesting and exciting, but it is a necessary component of modern education if we are to educate responsibly for tomorrow's citizenry. International Education does not happen by itself, as man is by nature ethnocentrically inclined. We are compelled, therefore, to consciously broaden our educational horizons to include a global view. It requires responsible, capable, and enthusiastic leadership. It is my hope that these remarks will be informative and useful for others.

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